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Letter dated 4 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary General

I have the honour to convey to you information on the measures taken by the Government of Uzbekistan to ensure the labour rights of citizens in accordance with national legislation and international labour standards (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72.

(*Signed*) Bakhtiyor **Ibragimov**
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Annex to the letter dated 4 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the measures taken to ensure the guaranteed labour rights of citizens in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan and international labour standards

Since independence, a foundation of standards and legislation established on the basis of the principles and norms of international law has strengthened guarantees of the protection of citizens' labour rights.

As a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Uzbekistan has ratified 14 ILO conventions, including Nos 29, 105, 138 and 182, which prohibit child labour and forced labour. Their provisions are reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which enshrines the right of every person to employment, a free choice of occupation, fair working conditions, unemployment protection, and the prohibition of forced labour.

National legislation strictly prohibits child labour and forced labour, including coercion to work through the threat of any form of punishment, including as an instrument to maintain work discipline. Forced labour of any kind incurs administrative penalties.

Adhering scrupulously to its international obligations and reaffirming its determination to prohibit such phenomena as child labour and forced labour, Uzbekistan is open to constructive international cooperation in that connection.

Close dialogue between the Government of Uzbekistan and ILO has facilitated the development of organizational and legal structures in this field. Working with ILO, the Government has been methodically implementing the 2017–2020 Decent Work Country Programme. Steps are being taken to incorporate international labour standards, in stages, into national law and law-enforcement practice.

A Coordinating Council on child labour and forced labour has been established and is operating effectively. In order to develop cooperation with ILO and implement the principles of international labour law, a range of measures has been put in place, and a series of meetings, conferences, seminars and round tables has been organized.

Through the implementation of consistent measures, a number of positive results have been achieved in terms of adherence to international labour standards and norms. Child labour has been entirely eradicated; efforts are under way and operational mechanisms are being established to prohibit and reject forced labour. As a result of its achievements, Uzbekistan has not appeared on the list of States with serious shortcomings in adherence to the ILO conventions since 2014.

Despite the measures implemented, much remains to be done to make them integrated and consistent. The unsatisfactory level of activity by State and other entities to inform the international community and international organizations about the large-scale efforts undertaken in Uzbekistan to ensure the guaranteed labour rights of citizens has at times led to a view of the situation that lacks objectivity.

In addition, there is a considerable obstacle to the prevention and elimination of forced labour in the form of poor execution by State executive and administrative authorities at local level of information campaigns to cater for the needs of seasonal agricultural labour and other community work, and insufficiently organized efforts

and lack of knowledge of labour legislation on the part of leaders of organizations, entities and farming enterprises and dekhan farms.

Particular focus and a radically new approach are required in order to increase the level of mechanization in agriculture; to use new agricultural technology and apply contemporary sustainable development standards to cotton cultivation; to ensure forward-looking development and the adoption and use in agriculture and aquaculture of innovations, scientific advances and modern information and communications technology; to adopt and use effective methods of managing seasonal agricultural labour and material incentives for workers; and to improve the related vocational skills of managers.

The current situation and the need for greater parliamentary and public oversight have led to the establishment (in October 2017) of a Parliamentary Commission on ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens. It consists of members of the Oliy Majlis Legislative Chamber and Senate, representatives of non-governmental non-profit organizations and civil society institutions, and has specific responsibilities connected with the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, in close cooperation with the Coordinating Council on child labour and forced labour.

The Parliamentary Commission has been charged with taking the following action to pursue full implementation of Uzbekistan's legislation and international agreements regarding the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, to strengthen measures to prevent and eliminate the risk of any form of child labour or forced labour, and to transmit to the wider international community reliable information on the current situation:

(a) Adopting a series of measures to ensure unconditional implementation of Uzbekistan's legislation to ensure the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, including legislation to prevent and prohibit the use of child labour or forced labour, as well taking the action provided for in the 2017–2020 Decent Work Country Programme;

(b) Establishing parliamentary and public oversight against violations of the guaranteed labour rights of citizens by State bodies, companies, institutions, entities and individuals;

(c) Using of all forms of parliamentary and public oversight in order to ensure the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, in accordance with Uzbekistan's legislation and international agreements;

(d) Taking joint action with State executive and administrative authorities at local level to increase the accountability of officials of State bodies and other entities for adherence to the labour rights of citizens, and for timely implementation of the programme for job creation and incorporation of the population into the workforce;

(e) Performing regular reviews of the effectiveness of action by leaders of State and economic authorities, local government bodies and other entities to implement national legislation and international agreements ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens;

(f) Conducting local-level studies of problems and shortcomings connected with the implementation of legislation ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens;

(g) Carrying out inventories of current legislation; developing specific proposals to improve legislation ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, by means including implementation and ratification of international labour standards;

(h) Undertaking wide-ranging local awareness-raising campaigns to ensure the sustainability of the gains made in ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens.

Moreover, in the light of the importance of efforts at local level to ensure the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, and in compliance with recommendations made, the Joqarg'i Ken'es of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the regional and Tashkent city *kengashi* of people's deputies have established local commissions for that purpose.

A series of measures has been adopted in order to ensure the guaranteed labour rights of citizens in accordance with national legislation and international labour standards.

The Government of Uzbekistan has been charged with taking concerted action to achieve the following:

(a) Adoption of market mechanisms, innovation, scientific advances and modern information and communications technology. The aim is to make agriculture more efficient and profitable and increase mechanization through measures including more machine-harvesting of cotton. Such measures will also apply to seasonal agricultural activity;

(b) Improving the use of existing and new agricultural technology; developing the selection of cotton varieties suited to mechanized harvesting and deriving maximum benefits from mechanization;

(c) Modernization of existing capabilities in agriculture, in order to improve the competitiveness of agricultural output;

(d) Devising strategies for the development of Uzbekistan's agriculture, taking into account the changes in and diversification of the agricultural sector and agricultural output, in order to elicit direct investment, foreign credit and technical cooperation resources;

(e) Developing a variety of economic incentives for seasonal workers and establishing proposals for improved labour relations in that connection.

Meanwhile, non-governmental non-profit organizations and other civil society institutions have been urged to take the following recommended action:

(a) Intensify efforts to adopt public oversight of compliance with international law and national legislation ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens by State executive and administrative authorities at local level, and by companies, entities, institutions and farming enterprises;

(b) Conduct a wide-ranging public awareness-raising campaign and adopt mechanisms to gather public feedback; adopt operational measures to exert peer pressure against individuals involved in violations of labour law and propose to the competent authorities ways to hold such individuals to account.

The Office of the Public Prosecutor of Uzbekistan will strictly monitor the implementation of national legislation ensuring the guaranteed labour rights of citizens, including legislation to prevent and prohibit the use of any form of child labour, paying particular attention to adherence to existing norms and legislation during seasonal agricultural and other community work.

Information on the activities of the Parliamentary Commission is disseminated widely in the media.